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PRICE, 25 CENTS

A STORY

THE BLOOD  
IS THE MAN.

BY

W. LAWTON-LOWTH

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THE BANCROFT COMPANY, PUBLISHERS  
San Francisco





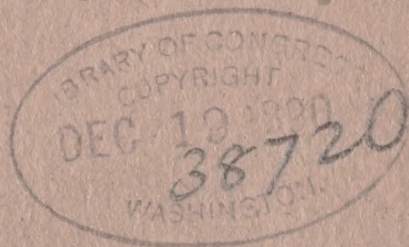


# THE BLOOD IS THE MAN



BY ✓

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W. Lawton-Louth



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THE BANCROFT COMPANY  
1890

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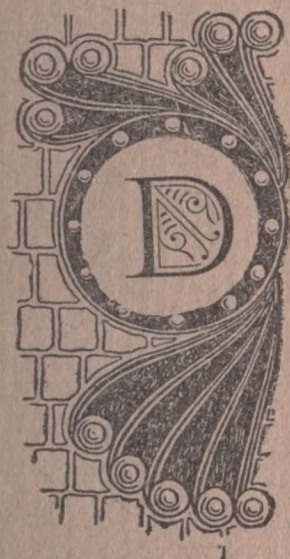




# THE BLOOD IS THE MAN

## CHAPTER I

DR. BAAJO, KNOWN AS A VISIONARY, BY THE FOLLOWERS  
OF HIPPOCRATES, GIVES HIS VIEWS ON  
THE NATURE OF BLOOD



R. BAAJO, upon whose strange complex personality rests the chief interest of this story, was born under the malign influence of an evil star, or, perhaps, more strictly speaking, under the malign influence of some power lower than that of a star. At any rate, half his face was stained, in purple, and this cruel brand he must bear with him to the grave. His symmetrical form, his expressive eyes and mouth had, as yet, been scarcely seen. In the purple stain, which often burned as though scorched by fire, apparently, centered all his attractions, for upon it rested the unflinching gaze of refined and delicate women; children questioned him respecting it, and even clergymen dropped the breeding of their cloth,



during the brief period that it fell under their notice. Often, in malice, when exposed to the scrutiny of an insolent eye, he would turn the defective side of his face to the best possible advantage for the observer—he would even throw back his long hair with a surly toss, as if further to reveal himself. He came, at length, to almost hate the human race. Yet there was an exception; one friend he had to whom he showed all the sweetness as well as all the bitterness, of his nature. This friend was Hermilio. Circumstances having thrown them together during many months, a mutual attraction matured into profound and lasting friendship, and in the security of his own room, with Hermilio as companion, the Doctor could forget, at times, his personal sufferings, caused by the cruelties of an unsympathetic world, and philosophy, coldly, upon its lack of charity. On other occasions—in moods of high satanic humor—he would berate mankind with unsparing tongue; none escaped him. He deemed his penetration could lay bear all human contrivances for covering human infirmities, mental or physical. He boasted that his classification was complete; that to establish a man's place in the scale of existence, a glance at the color of his face, or at the outlines of his form,



was to him of itself, sufficient; that woman, though hopelessly imbedded in conventional lies, was still to him an open book.

The Doctor spent many hours, daily, in his laboratory, deeply absorbed in work, yet, finding time to express his private opinions to Hermilio, who, being sure of a welcome, often sought him there.

Circumstances mould character, and determine the line of its development.

Deprived, by his physical blemish, of the privilege of mingling in society, on equal terms, he found solace in fields of study unknown to most men. He had become familiar with certain books treating of the undeveloped, occult force in man and nature; and also familiar with strange tales of astral or spirit vampires, prolonging their stay on earth, by feeding upon the blood of the living.

One day, in an expansive mood, he said to Hermilio: "After all the blood is everything."

"Everything?"—exclaimed Hermilio.

"Yes, everything. In it is to be found the cause of all that has been achieved by the human family."

"Is not that too broad an assertion?"

"No," continued the Doctor, "religion, poetry, courage, cowardice, virtue, vice, health, disease, *everything* takes its tone, color and character from the blood."



“Not religion surely?”

“More than anything else. Every man’s God—good or bad—is determined by the fire and flow of his blood.”

“You alarm me! I believed religion to be independent of the senses, and that it had been evolved to satisfy man’s spiritual needs?”

“Nonsense—religion is a matter of food and digestion, and is as subject to change as are the other forces in the universe. It is the spiritual nature, or the things of the spirit, created by itself, that the blood delights to reveal. It is the key unlocking the door of the man invisible; by its evanescent flashes, the soul and body part with their secrets. Watch the face of any man for an hour—there, his inmost being will tell you of itself—there, the sensual will proclaim its power. The desires of the incorporeal, and the corporeal, have their different insignia, so that he who knows may read. Few have schooled their blood—few brought it under the dominion of the will. Yes! a person who exposes his face, reveals himself—he shows his colors.”

“To the initiated?”

“To me, or to any one who has studied this subject. You, of course, know that each man has his own particular manner of making blood?”



“ I had never thought of it, but it may be so.”

“ It is so. He, whose system makes blood easily, is lower in the scale of intelligence than he who makes it with difficulty ; quality here, as everywhere, queens it over quantity. He who eats by instinct, has not improved on the habits of his progenitors of the lower world ; he assimilates, on the animal plane—his blood will be rank, and circulate rapidly. The man, who *tastes*, has looked upon the tree of knowledge—his blood moves at his will, he is gathering to himself experiences that will help to make him, in some far off eons, immortal. The visible effects of a reserved and parsimonious circulation, impelled by even ignoble desires, are, always, more perceptible than those of a swift, uncertain one, though urged by noble impulses.”

“ Your views are peculiar.”

“ Not at all—I even go further, and maintain that the masculine, and feminine principles, are represented by the red and white corpuscles. The white corpuscles, heretofore, have not been understood ; they are known to be of finer structure than the red, and by virtue of this fineness, they have the power to pass through the walls of the capillary tissue, and at will, to wander to and fro, without doing harm. The red corpuscles, although derived



from the white, are heavy, stubborn, and being void of curiosity, are incapable of migrating, or of taking flying trips into any worlds, not strictly their own, but in that own they are the cause of all its trouble."

"Good heavens"—said Hermilio laughingly—"the two sexes, then, are mingling indiscriminately—and no law to regulate them."

"Oh, laugh as you please. I will go even another length, and say that under a higher civilization, marriages will be made, not upon any system now in vogue, but upon one that will insure to those governed by it, perfect peace for the future."

"May I ask what that system will be?"

"Certainly—by analysis of the blood of the contracting parties. By this means it could be ascertained whether happiness would be possible."

"I fail, even yet, to see how."

"Remember the blood is the life, that the white corpuscles stand for mental energy—that in every partnership the possessor of the greatest number of white corpuscles, must dominate. The one deficient in white corpuscles, must inevitably fall subordinate. Marriage should be a state where opposite poles hold, in equilibrium, the forces brought together by the desires of man. Eternal



harmony can only be, when these things are better understood."

"Then," said Hermilio, "you having mastered the subject, can tell, by a glance, whether two people should marry?"

"Yes—by their color. If they harmonize by strong contrast, or blend by closely related colors, rightly proportioned, there may be hope for the future. The individual, justly made—well held together by the true bond of opposite but inter-blending forces, and, therefore, perfectly balanced—meeting his like, could be content with her; but the ill-made, one-sided, must seek his counterpart. I can even point out people, who show by their color, that they were born of uncongenial parents.

"This is vastly interesting, but have we not wandered far away from common sense?"

"Not at all," continued the Doctor—"the blood is the most mysterious and potential of God's works. Intellectual development comes through the burning processes of the blood; within each globule, red or white, slumbers a spark of fire; igniting as it runs—marking its course by red and white flames—it creates thought, good or bad, according to its degree of refinement. The incentive to the noblest deed, as well as to that of the basest, may be traced back



to the blood. The source of reason's cold abstractions, as well as intuition's subtleties, is found in the blood ; it even pushes its way to the creating of soul. I have wished you to know something of my feeling on the subject, that you, at least, might understand my views."

While to the sane mind of Hermilio these conjectures appeared chimerical, they, yet, charmed and betrayed him into the loss of many an hour, passed in idle talk and fruitless discussion.



## CHAPTER II

DR. BAAJO YIELDS TO THE SEDUCTIONS OF OPPORTUNITY  
AND SAVES THE LIFE OF CHRYSORIS,  
BY TRANSFUSION



ELEGRAPPIA opened the window.

In the first beams of the morning, the lamp's yellow flame looked coarse and material; she felt this, and putting it out turned again to the East, whose first aerial blush was merging into the glow of coming day. Finding no inspiration there, she went softly back to the couch, where, through the long night, had lain her son, Chrysis. "He is dying"—she thought—"they have said it—and I see it."

She drew away to the farthest corner of the room, and sitting down, bowed herself over, and clasped her knees in dumb sorrow.

Hermilio moved softly about the room, pacing to and fro between the corner where his mother crouched, and the open space where his brother lay.

The curtains parted, and Pamphilia, again, bent over the extended form. Its tranquil fixedness of



seeming eternal repose, answered the quick glance of her questioning eyes. Kneeling, she clasped within her own the cold and unresponsive hand of her husband. She touched his brow whereon death's dew stood in crystal drops. She placed her cheek to his lips, from whence a wave of air—a vibration so faint it might have been the ghost of a spirit's breath—came and thrilled her. She laid her ear to his heart—a low, muffled sound from beneath, stirred his breast; he was not yet dead.

“Mother,” whispered Hermilio, “all has not been done—my brother still breathes—he must not die—shall I go for Dr. Baajo?”

“Yes, Hermilio, go quickly, there is a chance. They say he employs magic—go Hermilio, go, go—and yet, when the highest skill has failed, what can we hope from Dr. Baajo?” said Melegrappia, again giving way to despair, as her son withdrew.

In a few brief words Hermilio made known his brother's condition to Dr. Baajo, who, without a word, hastened to the scene where he looked long upon the young Chrysoris, stretched, unconscious, upon his bed.

“Dr. Baajo, it is said my brother must die. In this terrible accident none of his bones have been broken, but from several wounds his blood has



poured in torrents ; he is but a pale reflex of the living man of yesterday."

"It is then," said the Doctor, "considered a hopeless case?"

"Yes, but I can not believe it."

"There is one thing," slowly said the Doctor, "an experiment"—

"Yes, yes, go on."

"But, Hermilio, you might not consent to it."

"Oh, yes; it affords a chance does it not?"

"A chance—yes—but a slender one—and even though it prove an apparent success, the results may be harmful."

"Waste no words about results—there he lies—to your work, and at once, or his death may occur while we are hesitating."

"I am at your service, then. The experiment I shall attempt is called transfusion of blood. My old gardener has, to-day, an assistant, a man, young and robust—who, for a consideration, may furnish us with what we need. He is near at hand. From your window you can see him now. Look at him well, then say if you wish me to proceed with the attempt."

"Yes, yes, call him at once, even now it may be too late—let us not lose another instant."



As the door opened to admit the stranger they turned again to Chrysis, paler now than the dead, for no purple shadows of lifeless blood relieved the transparent whiteness of his face. Exhausted—motionless—cold—a mere lingerer on the shores of time—a slight flutter of the eyelids alone, showed that he was still alive.

Gonzagi, the man who had agreed to sell his blood for money, drew near the prostrate form—in every point the opposite to his own. Its motionless apathy affected him curiously, with an ill-defined feeling of displeasure. His impulse was to fly, his judgment said “stay—to you gold is more precious than blood.” And so with mingled feelings of doubt and eagerness, he awaited the Doctor’s instructions.

When, as a last resort, Dr. Baajo had suggested the experiment of transfusion, Pamphilia, alone had dissented. From the swart Gonzagi emanated an aura, subtle and penetrating—it touched her like a palpable thing, troubling and shocking her refined nature. She trembled with affright, when he was brought to the bedside of Chrysis and shuddering, she quit the room, at the request of the Doctor, who saw that she was unnerved, and unfit to remain.



Dr. Baajo shook his head with a significant movement, when taking into his own, the limp and pulseless hand of Chrysoris. Nevertheless, as he skillfully set about his task, he inspired hope. He neither heard the mother's sobs, nor felt the woe of any, nor mingled with his work that sentimental pity, which spares and spoils. His grasp was firm, his details precise, his hand steady, his brain unclouded. He was at ease in a realm where all his knowledge centered. Success, would mean triumph—failure, only an incident common, and to be expected in every man's professional career.

Into the flaccid veins of the dying man he quickly transfused the seething blood of Gonzagi, who remained silent, with a frown still clouding his dark brow.

The black stream, unaccustomed to the peaceful highways traversing the frame of Chrysoris, tore its way through with passionate throbs. Between the red and angry corpuscles of the bold invader, and the feeble remnant within, there ensued a brief but decisive war. The stronger, and more vital principle, establishing its reign, the reviving man thrilled with a bitter, sweet intoxication. His lips quivered with pain; his trembling lids opened, revealing eyes of deepening hue, and his body



became animate. \* \* \* Gazing upon Gonzagi—his first words were:

“What is that ? Is it my soul or my body ?”

“Neither”—replied the Doctor—“It is only one who has served you well ; through him your life has been saved.”

“No, no—I am the spirit—that is my body. It is all so familiar—yet, this cannot be death. No—he is my double—he is the image of myself—he reproaches me with sombre glances, but speaks not, he grows pale, and seems to fade away.”

Even as he spoke, Gonzagi passed from the room, a silent figure, from whom all energy had departed. The glow of life no more irradiated him ; he drooped as one perplexed and ashamed, and the glance of his eyes was earthward. \* \* \*

There was a time of adjustment and reconstruction,—and behold !—this man no longer thought as Chrysoris had thought—no longer saw or felt as Chrysoris had seen and felt. With the mysterious birth of new feelings, new desires, new hopes, was opened to him a world unimagined heretofore. “Were they his own—those visions weird, uncouth, blent and broken, as things seen in dread nightmares ?” All his former life spread out far behind him, like a fading dream—undefined, but entranc-



ing—yet, so unreal seemed this dream that, at times, he questioned it.

Nature striving to heal, yet, delayed by an undercurrent of opposition, at length asserted her supremacy, and Chrysoris gradually gained strength. The haunting memory, which, in the beginning tormented him, little by little shrank away, and became an indistinct reminiscence of something, he knew not what. During his convalescence, he chafed under a restless desire to get out into the world. When a chair was placed for him, at the window, that he might see the vast concourse of life, in its ceaseless ebb and flow, he begged to be taken away, exclaiming, "Oh, I cannot see it."

"But"—urged Hermilio—"it may amuse you."

"Amuse me? Great God! man, how is it you are here, with these ill-timed suggestions? What can you mean? No!—to see men, with strong bodies, moving swiftly, to fulfill their purposes, while I am here, caged like an animal, drives me mad. No—I cannot look on! Close the window. I will go back into my heart and there brood, till the day comes when I shall be free to go, as others go."

Every feature of his face had changed in expression; the serene eyes had cloudy depths—the smooth brow had knotted lines—the smiling lips



were compressed in grim silence, or gave voice to savage words.

Hermilio saw, with pain, that he no longer filled his wonted place in the affections of his brother, and to this was added increased anxiety, when he discovered that the settled frown, the deep absorption, the biting words, the abrupt manners, were a part of the new man, fitting him, as does the glove the hand.

Chrysoris, the eldest son, and the hope of his family, had—earlier than was the custom of his country—wedded a young and beautiful woman, who moved on his own plane of existence.

Heretofore, nothing had occurred to mar their happiness. No grievous episodes of evil fortune had taken them from the tranquil paths of uneventful lives. Not knowing despair, they knew not ecstasy. Unheeding the roar of the world around them—peacefully, joyously they moved on, content with the simple pleasures, filling their days.

But now Pamphilia looked into eyes indifferent to her beauty ; she appealed to a heart absorbed in emotions in which she had no part. When, in the breast of her husband, her presence no longer awakened love's response she felt he was lost to her, and when to the bitterness of his coldness, was added



neglect, scorn, and cruelty, she withdrew from his home, and passing into solitude, made apothegms from the lessons of her experience. The airy images, evoked by love's desire, she named illusions, and sorrowfully taking new bearings, she narrowed her horizon and the sterile world, then found, she stamped as the eternally true.



## CHAPTER III

### THE TRANSFORMATION



CHRYSORIS and Hermilio, had been trained in the same schools—they had shared the pleasures of boyhood, and, later, since the death of their father, responsibility had brought them more intimately together.

Adoring him—Hermilio took a brotherly pride in the personal beauty and fine character of Chrysoris. There was no man but honored him for his worth—no woman but admired him for his grace and sweetness. Now—all changed—withdrawn into himself, and wrapped about in melancholy, he slowly paced his chamber floor, or moved with rapid strides, as though pricked from without by some biting care.

As they had lived much in the open air, Hermilio fancied the monotony of the sick-room had wrought upon, and disturbed, the natural disposition of his brother, and he resolved to give him the fresh air at the earliest moment possible—to place him under



the influence of new scenes and thus try to divert into happier channels, the flow of sombre ideas now possessing him.

With this kindly intention, on a delicious afternoon—a soft shower of rain having left only beauty and perfume on the earth—the carriage was ordered for a drive.

“Take my arm, Chrysoris. You will fall if you make such long, hurried steps.”

Even the voice had lost its olden gentleness as he replied, “I am in my usual walk, and have not the smallest idea of falling. I don’t understand why you are forever pitching these little nothings at me, as if I were a feeble, failing man.”

“You have been very ill and are not yet well,” said Hermilio.

For a moment, a puzzled, then an anguished expression, stole over the face of Chrysoris, and, for a time, he spoke no more. His former suavity of manner had given place to gloomy silence, at other periods, a vulgar craving for action and excitement, characterized him. Some energy, new-born and fierce, seemed to possess and urge him on. But as tremendous physical shocks have been known to work entire revolutions in the mental, as well as in the bodily character of men, Hermilio—observing



and feeling all—prayed for patience, and loved him as of yore.

As they went on, Hermilio strove to interest his brother in the grotesque features of the scenes which met their eyes. It was useless. Chrysoris saw no one person, or thing—he saw the whole. His eyes glowed with slumbering heat; he chafed under some restriction which maddened him, and at times he clenched his hands in a sort of ecstasy of powerlessness.

As they were passing to the north of an obscure and neglected quarter of the city, he signified his wish to enter a short street, which had caught his all-devouring gaze.

“Perhaps he is developing the artist side of his nature, and wishes to see the picturesqueness of poverty—poverty, that condition of life so warmly and heartily recommended to the poor by the rich”—mused Hermilio, with a touch of Dr. Baajo’s cynicism.

As they passed along the street, Chrysoris looked about, here and there, as upon things familiar—“That chimney must have been built lately, and yonder old gate still hangs on its one hinge—Ah, there it is! Stop! coachman,”—and jumping from the carriage, in a moment he disappeared.



When Hermilio saw his brother dart through an open door, his impulse was to follow him, but, on reflection, he decided to wait, at least a while. He gazed about, with increasing curiosity, upon his surroundings. The street was short and narrow, uninviting in aspect and more than ordinarily disgusting in its details of sights and odors. Children, in rags and dirt, quarrelled and laughed by turns. A mother, slattern, and hollow-eyed from toil, sorrow and insufficient food, snatched from the street a small atom of humanity who—from his size—one would have thought—was on his first voyage of discovery.

Hermilio knew that brothers, and even fathers, have secrets. He had learned that the patrician, from prudential motives, often leaves the highways for the modest by-paths of unpretentious vice.

Chrysoris had, heretofore, taken pride in his punctilious propriety. He had never failed in his *role* of gentleman. "All things coarse and ugly are sinful, and should be hidden from sight," he was wont to say, and none suspected he had anything to hide. If there was aught mean or vile in his nature none had seen it—none been made to know or feel it. While stoically waiting, Hermilio's mind was engrossed by a vital question—"What, then, was



engaging the attention of his brother here, in a place so utterly at variance with all his tastes ?"—and becoming impatient, at the end of half an hour, he looked inside the door.

Then entering the small, rather dark hall, he saw farther on a pair of narrow stairs. Just at his left was the open door of a now empty room, which he perceived must be that of a shoemaker. There was all sorts of rubbish—old shoes, big and little and in all stages of abuse; the boy's boot open to the weather; the half-grown girl's, run down at the heel; the old man's slipper, broad and past all vanity; pieces of leather and the necessary implements for cobbling, and above all arose that odor, so stifling, so unmistakable of the inmate's calling.

Hermilio stayed but a moment. Finding all below quiet and deserted, he concluded that his brother must be above. In mounting the stairs he moved cautiously, for there was mystery in the air. The sounds heard on either side, accentuated the silence wrapping this mean abode, which but poorly confirmed his first suspicion of it as a romantic rendezvous. He reached the uppermost hall; there were two doors in sight. He rapped at the first; there was no response. He rapped at the second; there was no response; then, he gently opened it



and looked in ; he saw a man, whom he thought asleep, sitting leaning over a table—his face to the door. Hermilio saw that he was young, handsome, short in stature, dark and seemingly of foreign birth. He saw that the room, while not richly, was still well furnished. Around about, on the walls, was a collection of fire-arms and daggers of all shapes and from every country. He saw, farther on, a window that evidently opened upon a roof above a temporary kitchen or outhouse. He softly closed the door and quietly opened the first at which he had rapped. The room was empty.

He ran down stairs and taking his stand in front of the house, patiently watched it for another half hour, then leaping into his carriage he drove rapidly home, agitated by various and conflicting thoughts : What had become of Chrysoiris ? What should he say to his mother ?



## CHAPTER IV

### GONZAGI, VICTIM OF THE EXPERIMENT, ACCUSES DR. BAAJO OF HAVING STOLEN HIS SOUL



WITH a mind in bondage to the false, the untenable, the unpopular, Dr. Baajo was considered dangerous, and a man to be avoided. Yet, in his profession, he was much sought by certain persons, who—finding neither comfort nor relief in approved modes of ministration to their ills—turned, with hope and superstitious awe to revolutionary methods. Accustomed to the doubtful returns, from assurances made by those moving in more respectable medical circles, they hailed innovation as, possibly, something upon which to rely. Dr. Baajo's rather commonplace custom of accusing himself of being moved by selfish aims, and heartless motives, captivated ears, wearied by the pretentious claims to disinterestedness and altruism indulged in by finer people; besides, he carried the *prestige* of having made miraculous cures, hence had a large following. Every day his rooms were



filled with those believing he had made some extraordinary discovery in the art of healing. In the *parlance* of the day, he was known as a quack; yet, he boasted that he knew but little of disease or remedy and was a mere blunderer with externals; he declared that the real man, incased in his mail of clay, gives glimpses at effects only—that the invisible cause of disease, or of health, lies too deep to be touched even by the most skillfull and subtle, for it abides in the blood, yea, in the *spirit* of the blood, moving as it will. Itself, by turns, it vitiates, purifies, enfeebles, revivifies; then, dying, leaves behind its useless shell to again reincarnate—perhaps!

His attention being called to the typical doctor in fiction, he cynically replied: “Possibly, a physician may be rough on the exterior, scorning civil speech and delicate act, and yet be capable of doing good in secret; he may have a heart overflowing with kindness, and a brain replete with lore; he may become a family adviser—a repository of family secrets; he may even make money, but it does not follow that he knows how to heal the sick. No, the doctor of fiction is a fiction.” And so he scoffed, and killed, and cured—but took no doses himself. Experience had taught him that a result satisfactory



at one period is just the reverse at another, therefore, he wisely refrained from congratulating himself on his apparent success in what he termed his experimental practice.

On the afternoon of the day on which Hermilio drove forth with his brother, Dr. Baajo made his first round through a hospital, to which he had recently been appointed inspector. Passing from one ward to another, he came upon a man whose face seemed familiar. A moment later, he recognized Gonzagi, of whom he had neither thought nor heard since the day he last saw him, now many weeks in the past.

"Well, well, my poor fellow, what is the matter with you?" asked the Doctor, startled at the man's changed appearance.

"I don't know—something has gone out of me," replied Gonzagi, sadly.

"Oh yes, we know that, but the loss of your blood did not affect you seriously at the time you parted with it."

"Oh, sir, it is not the loss of my blood of which I speak; I lived but for one purpose—one purpose, and now I don't care for it any more," said Gonzagi.

"You look as pale as a ghost. Do you have enough to eat here?"



“Yes, the best of everything, but it is no use, the soul of me is gone, you have taken my soul. Oh, oh! even my dog has forsaken me!”

His great eyes, lying in his colorless face, were extinct of fire, but the Doctor fancied that deep within there yet smouldered a spark which would some day again light his countenance.

“Nonsense, man—is this the way to get health and strength? to lie here, moan and talk of your soul—pooh, you never had a soul and being rid of that black blood, you will be saved many a day’s sickness and misery.”

“You talk well,” said Gonzagi, “but here I am; I wanted money horribly, horribly; when I got it, I no longer needed it. The one savage desire of my life went out with my blood, and now I am nothing—nothing.”

The words fell from his lips like sighs from a broken heart.

“Oh, you are not so badly off as you think; try and sleep to-night—I will leave you some medicine, and to-morrow you may see me again.”

The Doctor was aroused to the interest of the case; he questioned the steward and found that Gonzagi ate, but that the food taken acted as a foreign sub-



stance, producing only weariness and disgust. He also interrogated the nurse.

"Tell me about Gonzagi, your patient. Has he been here long?"

"It is now," replied the nurse, "some weeks since he came. He hasn't any special ailment—simply, his vital force ebbs day by day."

"Is he well taken care of?"

"Certainly! You see, do you not, that all his wants are supplied?"

"Yes, yes—but what is it all about?"

"His trouble"—learnedly pursued the nurse—"is a mental trouble. He gazes at one spot on the floor for hours—his mournful eyes never close, day or night; rain or shine, he is, alike, indifferent; he never complains, smiles, or seems to wish to get away; he shows no interest in anything—he is dying of a broken heart."

"Oh, bosh! he talks of his lost soul, and you of his broken heart, as though such things were possible. Let us find some food he can eat with relish and digest with ease, and he will find his soul quickly enough and his heart will mend readily. Has he no friends or relations who visit him here?"

"None that I have ever seen."

"Does he never talk?"



"At times he speaks in a disconnected way of travels in a far country—of seas, mountains and deserts—of hardships endured—but there's no sense in it—he mumbles words as in a dream. He told me when he first came that he had committed an unpardonable folly, but he failed to mention the nature of the folly."

"He spoke truly,"—muttered the Doctor under his breath as he paced the floor, more disturbed than he cared to confess—"and something must be done speedily."

He arrested his steps and, with eyes downcast, turned over in his mind his theories upon the nature of blood. "After all"—he asked himself—"What is blood? Has it, then, a head like a tape-worm—and have I drawn that head from Gonzagi and put it into the body of Chrysores—and can Gonzagi, having lost the mysterious source of increase, ever again fill his shrunken veins and arteries? What can be done now? Must I once more resort to transfusion—then again and again?"

His fancy ran along an imaginary line of bloodless men, one after another calling on him to give them back their lost souls.



He was recalled to reality by the nurse's voice—  
“Very well, I stand ready to take your orders.”

“I will leave a prescription to be made up—but honestly, I don't know what to do at present—I will go home and study the case, it is a singular one; and to-morrow I will take some decisive step—meantime, continue your good care and, if possible, report him better to me in the morning.”

Dr. Baajo took his leave, and went directly to the home of Chrysoris, whom he had not seen for some days. His professional services being no longer required, he had ceased to make stated visits, but knew himself to be a welcome guest at any hour.



## CHAPTER V

### THE STRANGE DISAPPEARANCE OF CHRYSORIS AND GRIEF OF MELEGRAPPIA.



UNCONSCIOUS of the beauties of this lovely evening, Melegrappia sat pondering over the trying events of the last two months, and while anxiously wondering why her sons did not return, Dr. Baajo was announced.

He had been at her house so frequently during the illness of Chrysis that she made no more of him than of a member of her family. Absorbed, she neither observed the cloud on his face nor the eager tone of his voice, as he said :

“I ran in to see my patient. Is he still improving ?”

“Oh, he seems well enough physically—he is out driving with Hermilio, and they may return at any moment,” replied Melegrappia sadly.

“Is Chrysis quite his old self ?” continued the Doctor.

“No ; he is much changed and in many respects. I fear the shock to his nervous system, occasioned



by that dreadful accident, has in some way affected his whole being—he is no longer the same man.”

“Mention some one thing wherein he is changed?”

“Have you not noticed how swarthy his complexion has become?”

“Yes—I have observed it.”

“And his temper is uncertain; the blood of my Chrysoris had always an even, a tranquil flow—now he is constantly giving external evidence of the emotions that disturb him.”

“Go on Melegrappia.”

“His stomach has undergone a revolution; his appetite spurns the dishes of his former delight; he revels in peppers and other biting things.”

“Go on, what more?”

“He once loved Pamphilia; at present he looks on her with indifference and appears scarcely to know her; he has been so rude that she no longer wishes to see him, and I—I am no more to him than a common servant—there is no recognition in his eyes; he looks upon me as an object apart from his world—not of it—he calls me Melegrappia.”

“Is this all?”

“No; he is moody and seems trying to adjust things in his mind—that mind I fear has gone astray.”



“And why have you not told me of this before?”

“Because, at first, I considered his caprices only the fancies of a sick brain, and I hoped they would, in time, pass away. I felt it to be a matter too delicate to speak of, and one not to be broached, even to you.”

None of this seemed of much importance to the Doctor, but before he had time to reply, hurried steps were heard in the hall and, a moment later, Hermilio entered, distracted in manner and appearance; he did not even perceive Dr. Baajo, and said in an agitated voice—

“Mother, is Chrysoris here?”

“No, Hermilio.”

“Then where can he have gone?”

“Gone—gone! What do you mean?” said Melegrappia, starting from her seat, in alarm.

“At his wish, we stopped in front of an old house in a small street; he jumped from the carriage, ran to the door, opened it and entered. At the end of half an hour I sought but did not find him. I waited another half-hour, then hastened home, hoping to see him with you. Has he not been here?”

“No, said Melegrappia.” “Where can he be—what does it mean? Perhaps he has at last decided to make his peace with Pamphilia. Go quickly,



Hermilio, but be prudent. Should you find him there, do not intrude—at present his waywardness must be indulged.”

He had not been to see Pamphilia who, offended and on ill terms with him, remained calm; she asked no questions of Hermilio, nor evinced so much interest as a stranger might have done.

During the short absence of Hermilio, Dr. Baajo decided that on account of the still delicate health of his patient, some immediate steps should be taken to find him, and when Hermilio entered, he was ready to counsel him as to the best methods of procedure.

“Did Chrysoris give you any idea where he was going?”

“None whatever”—replied Hermilio.—“The place though entirely new to me, seemed familiar to him. He spoke of changes that had taken place in his absence. Suddenly his face became dark and angry-looking; he promptly ordered the coachman to stop, sprang to the ground while the carriage was still in motion, and disappeared in the house in less time than I take in telling it.”

“Very well, he is in the city and can be found—a man cannot so easily lose himself. Why did you not speak to the police in the neighborhood?”



“He is so unlike himself of late, I thought it best to do everything else before employing the police, but now I must do so.”

“Certainly, and at once,”—said the Doctor, as he turned to say a soothing word to Melegrappia, who stood wringing her hands, making foolish speeches, and not even seeming to hear when she was told to be patient and to keep to the house till their return.

Gargulius had been a good, a rare husband. Both generous and just, he saw perhaps, with an inner eye, that to possess, one must bestow ; that value can only be received for value given ; that we get in happiness precisely what we give for it.

In return for material benefits by Gargulius conferred, Melegrappia, as her moiety in building the home, gave sons, and, without a word, the account between them was satisfactorily balanced.

Melegrappia had no occasion to criticise the weak points of the marriage system in vogue. No menial service on the one hand, no cunning arts or dishonest smiles on the other were demanded of her in exchange for food and raiment, hence all undeveloped within her slept that faculty for deceit and finesse, called the feminine faculty. Living naturally, her self-respect remained intact. She was not only a satisfactory wife, but a perfect one. And when Gar-



gulus, the envied of men, was laid with his fathers, grief for the first time touched her; but now a deeper, more ruthless sorrow was approaching her.

After making arrangements with two police officers to search for the missing man, the Doctor, seeing he could be of no more service to Hermilio, bade him good night, and turned towards his home.

It being a matter of secondary importance to him, he laid but little stress upon the temporary absence of Chrysoris. He had in contemplation a subject of more serious anxiety. In a dull and decent way, he had taken some pleasure in the result of his experiment. The welfare of Gonzagi had not been considered a necessary factor in this result. Now, behold! Gonzagi before him, risen as one from the dead, to confront and accuse him.

He reached his door resolved to think no more till events arranged themselves in a more favorable light. But—despite his philosophy—despite his disgust for human emotion, he awaited the dawn with feverish impatience, for the soulless eyes of Gonzagi had haunted him through the night.



## CHAPTER VI

THE POLICE IN SEARCH OF CHRYSORIS COME UPON A  
DEAD MAN WITH A KNIFE IN HIS HEART  
AND A LETTER IN HIS HAND.



HE disappearance of Chry-  
soris, though a matter of  
grave importance to Mele-  
grappia, seemed a small  
affair to the police officers  
detailed to find him.  
The fact that a man of  
mature years, without the advice or consent of his  
family had—during the space of several hours—  
absented himself from his home did not—in their  
code—constitute even an indiscretion. They prom-  
ised, however, that no time should be lost, and, no  
doubt, they had the wish and the intention of show-  
ing diligence when they began the search, but the  
necessity for beginning had not yet become mani-  
fest to them ; therefore, while Melegrappia and Her-  
milio were waiting in anxious expectation for news,  
they were calmly discussing matters agreeable to



their taste and talent. At last, it seemed that if the work were to be done before midnight it must be commenced at once. They accordingly took hold of it seriously. Their bustling enthusiasm conveyed the impression that they lived for duty alone, and to see public order properly maintained.

It was now late. They looked into the street indicated by Hermilio. The people had gone to bed and all was quiet. After speculating upon the probable effect of waking up one family after another, the whole length of the street, to find some one who had seen a carriage standing before a certain house, they decided that a wiser and quicker way would be to return and secure aid.

Hermilio was still with Melegrappia. These hours, the saddest they had ever known together, dragged heavily, and when the door-bell rang they bounded from their seats with feelings of hope and relief, but when the two policemen appeared empty-handed, Melegrappia sank again to her seat in disappointment and Hermilio, gravely anxious, gave his attention to what was said.

They stated that before commencing the search, a more definite knowledge of the place seemed necessary—that Hermilio, being the only person in possession of that knowledge, must accompany them.



Pale, but resolved, Hermilio whispered something to his mother and without a word more went with them.

They reached the street and the house ; they roused the old shoemaker, who grumblingly unlocked the door. Fear and curiosity prompted him to swallow his wrath, when he saw who were his midnight visitors. Standing in the moonlight, old, wrinkled and with imprecations still issuing from his lips, he corresponded in appearance with their mental image of the evil one.

“ Who lives here ? ” demanded one of the men.

“ I do,” replied the shoemaker.

“ Very well—does any one else lodge in the house ? ”

“ Yes ; a man has the rooms above me.”

“ Is he at home ? ”

“ I don’t know, but I suppose so. May I ask what all this means ? ”

“ Certainly—a person came here this afternoon ; he entered by the front door and disappeared rather strangely. Is there an opening in the rear by which anyone could leave the house ? ”

“ Yes, under some circumstances. From my little kitchen there leads a door, but when I go out—and I was out till late this afternoon—I lock it and take the key with me. The shop remains open ; there is



nothing in it worth stealing and people sometimes leave their orders—so the man did not go out by my back door. And Parolio—so far as I have seen—never has visitors.”

“ We must go thoroughly over the whole place beginning with the lower floor.”

“ Certainly — but has this man committed a crime ? ”

“ No.”

“ Then why are you hunting him ? ”

“ Because his friends fear something has befallen him—that is all.”

“ Very well—go on—search the house, I will come with you.”

Chrysoris was not found below, nor any trace of him seen. Then, they mounted the stairs.

Whatever may be the standard of manners amongst the police as a body, it was—on this occasion—without fault. A rap, not aggressive nor even threatening was given — one that might have appealed to ears inclined to hospitality. There was no response. The patience of official politeness wanes under too much provocation, and the door was opened.

The man, seen by Hermilio, in the afternoon, still sat, with position unchanged, serenely medita-



tive—perchance croning the later theories of a later day. No ! The sombre character of the head ; its finished immobility ; the subtle silence wrapping the form, were eloquent of death. Yes,—he was dead !

It was with no feigned start that Hermilio beheld him for the second time. He looked closely, as if to verify a vision ; he saw, beneath the table, a black pool that had spread a space, and was now cold and solid ; he saw a knife in the breast, and a crumpled paper in the right hand, of what was once, the living, breathing Parolio—for the shoemaker had recognized the man as his lodger.

The search was no longer thought of. The coroner was hastily sent for ; and all formalities, common in such cases, having been observed, preparations were made to hold an inquest. The paper was first taken from the stiffened fingers. It was dated from a foreign land, many months since, and these were its contents :

“ Parolio, I have sworn, before the Lord God Almighty, and before the mother who bore me, that somehow, somewhere, sooner or later, I will kill you. You came to my happy home, and—under the guise of friendship—broke the peace of that home, and left it in ruins. My young sister lies in a dishonored grave, and there is nothing that can keep me from your heart. I will hunt you, from one end of the world to the other, with bleeding feet ; if need be, I will starve, I will steal, to compass my end—



that end being your death. You may think to escape—never—never, and may hell's deepest agony await the soul that knew not pity. *Gonzagi.*”

Gonzagi, then, was the assassin.

The long blade was slowly drawn from where it had lain embedded in a human heart; and Hermilio recoiled with horror, as his affrighted gaze rested on the familiar shape of a knife that bore on its handle his father's name, and which of late years had been in the keeping of Chrysoris.

The perils of the moment grew. Hermilio longed to fly, but could not. The horrible, fascinated and held him to the spot. In thought, he drifted from improbability to improbability. In one brief day he had stepped from peace, where all was open and understood, into complications of mystery and crime. His dream-lit eyes sought the air. He fancied the man's soul had not yet passed, but lingered round about, menacing with ghostly scowl, and ever beneath the mad array of images darkening his mind, ran, in undertone, this mournful cadence—  
“Chrysoris! My brother—Oh! My brother!”

It was suggested that, in all probability, there was no such a man as Gonzagi—the letter being merely a ruse employed by the real culprit to give himself a little time in which to escape. Evidence pointed in the direction of Chrysoris as the assassin. His



visit to the house and his disappearance were both facts on which to base a strong suspicion of his guilt. Hermilio, directly connected with the deed, must be retained and consider himself under the law's custody till the culprit be found.

The body of Parolio, taken possession of, as is usual under similar circumstances where no friends or relatives appear, became of secondary importance. The assassin was now the all-engrossing subject of attention. The murdered man was poor and mean in interest compared with him who slew him. Here there was something more than the fascination of hunting the savage beast in his native haunt ; here was the additional charm of situation, in which one man's cunning was pitted against the combined wisdom of the many. What has been, wakes to life, no dormant faculties of the soul, nor goads to action the genius of man. To-day, to-morrow, what is—what may be, honor, emoluments,—these arouse the sleeping instincts in the breast of the pursuer,—and immediately all the unseen machinery of the detective system was put in motion to effect the capture of the murderer of Parolio.



## CHAPTER VII

DR. BAAJO, AFTER A VISIT TO THE HOSPITAL, GOES TO  
THE COUNTRY IN DISGUST



HE waking thought of Dr. Baajo, was of Gonzagi, and, as early as his other duties would permit, he repaired to the hospital. His first glance told him that, in point of health, Gonzagi had greatly improved. A soft glow was upon his skin, and his eyes could, once again, speak.

“Well,”—asked the Doctor, taking his hand—  
“have you found your soul?”

“No! but it will return to me.”

“Ah! your mind is, still, somewhat muddled.”

“Perhaps so—I feel at peace, but over that peace lies a shadow.”

“But what matters peace or war, since you are now going to get well.”

“Yes—I’m all right. In a few days I shall be out of this.”

“Well spoken! do so, and let us hear no more of you”—and, with revived spirits, the Doctor arose



to take his leave. Searching for his gloves, he drew from his pocket the morning paper, folded—and still unread by him. He gave it to Gonzagi—perhaps as a small expression of gratitude to him for being better. Gonzagi opened it mechanically, showing only a languid interest.

The Doctor, noting the changes in Gonzagi's countenance since the day before, found it still pinched, but in him, altogether, there was a great improvement.

Suddenly a fierce cry rang through the place. Gonzagi's eyes, dilating with horror, were fixed to the paper. A deathly pallor crept over his face. His head fell on his breast. He had fainted.

Fortunately, the Doctor was at hand, and Gonzagi was, in time, brought back to his proper senses. When he was once more lying at ease, the Doctor said to him—"What made you faint?"

"Something I saw in the paper."

"What was it?"

"A man has been found dead—killed with a knife."

The Doctor took the paper and read the headlines—"Mysterious assassination of Parolio. The murderer still at large, etc."

"He was then, doubtless, a particular friend of



yours"—added the Doctor—"don't let this trouble you too much—death is as easy one way as another."

"Do you really think so?"—demanded Gonzagi, with something like a sneer on his face.

"Oh, that depends, I grant, somewhat on the point of view, but since he had such a hold on your heart, why has he not been here to visit you?"

"I have not seen him for several years; he may not have known I was in the country," replied Gonzagi.

"A friend of your youth?"

"Yes—a friend of my youth."

"It would seem that of late years you have lost sight of each other?"

"Yes."

"It is frequently like that—our warm young feelings become the playthings of chance, and time chills them."

"Time had not chilled my feelings for Parolio. From the day we parted even to this moment they remain the same."

"To me all this is incomprehensible," said the Doctor. "Still these exaggerated states of feelings furnish an agreeable study. I trust this tragic event will not have a bad effect upon you—I had hoped to see you out in a few days."



“ Oh, yes, in less time—to-day even—for I must see Parolio dead.”

“ But will that not be too much for you ? ”

“ No, no—a million times, no—I must see him, I tell you. No power on earth shall prevent me from seeing him ! ”

“ Calm yourself, Gonzagi ; no one thinks of preventing you.”

“ Besides, Doctor,” resumed Gonzagi more quietly, “ I must now go to my mother. I have something important to tell her. It will be a sad meeting between us.”

“ You are a strange fellow ; you faint because a common mortal happens to get killed, and you are not overjoyed at the prospect of seeing your mother. Yes—you are a queer fellow.”

“ I find you equally queer.”

“ Oh, very well, Sir !—good-morning.”

The Doctor, like most of free lances, was slightly sensitive to the return blow and walked away briskly as was his wont when irritated. He had had enough of the Gonzagi-Chryсорis affair ; and eager as he had been, earlier, to see both parties, he now felt one of them had been more than sufficient. Gonzagi was decidedly cured. Chryсорis was prob-



ably at home asleep—and if he was not, what did it matter.

“I am sick of it. I long for a day or two in the country where I can wander in a large garden and forget the whole human family with its diseases and frailties,” mused the Doctor. He bethought him of an invitation from a friend living not far from the city and, though sneering at people led by their feelings, there was not to be found a person more ready to act on the inspiration of the moment. Making his necessary professional visits, he gave his address to the housekeeper and was gone, without so much as leaving a word for any one.

Dr. Baajo sunned himself in the garden of his friend. His cynicism could now sleep awhile, for no ruthless eye was bent upon the purple of his face, no artless child was there to ask—“who did it?”—nor holy man of God, to rebuke his sinful ways. He was free from the vexing presence of man and woman. He stood, looking at some struggling trees transplanted from a hotter clime.

“Transplanting,” he reflected, “is attended with uncertainty—still, some things have been done while the future promises more”—and for a moment he thought of Chrysoris. His friend, a recluse and cynic also, now joined him. They bent over the



flowers and talked innocently as two girls might have done.

“Flowers,” said the Doctor, “to me are beautiful mysteries. I don’t know how they are made nor shall I ever try to find out.”

“But,” said his friend, “you must know something of their habits and of their seasons for life and death.”

“No, they are God’s, therefore sacred—yet, once seen they abide and become a part of me. No impertinent curiosity of mine shall attempt to bind them in time and space—seek to unveil the mysteries of their lives or to penetrate the laws of their unfolding lest that feeling, deeper and dearer than can be any satisfaction coming from analytical knowledge, depart and leave me all unblest. I am interlinked with the chain of being, conscious and unconscious, and I grasp the flower’s soul with a subtler instinct and make it mine forever.”

“Your soul, then, is a garden?”

“Yes,” laughingly responded the Doctor, “but let us leave all that and come to the visible world. Look at that rose—a fragrant joy to itself—awakening in man a responsive joy. It is broken from its stem; each delicate part scrutinized by brutal eyes. For what? That one fool may vaunt him in knowl-



edge over another. What then? Has he solved the riddle? Not he. No; for me birds and flowers shall remain as though designed for my pleasure and happiness."

"You know they were not."

"I don't know it; I only know that these beautiful creations shall rest forever free from any desecrating touch of mine."

"The study of mankind," continued the Doctor in a changed voice, "has been enough."

"You speak as if the results had not been entirely satisfactory?"

"Results? who can know anything of results? There are no results."

And they still walked, talking of a thousand things, and so light became the Doctor's spirits finally, that even when a breathless messenger appeared he felt he could in nowise be concerned. But after a note was given him, and he had read the following:

"Dr. Baajo, come to us as soon as possible!

"HERMILIO."

he immediately prepared to answer the summons, muttering between his teeth, "What in heaven's name is in store for me now? Is Chrysoris, that breeder of misfortune, again at death's door? If so, I will never say him nay."



He arrived soon after, and was startled at the complex state of affairs. An evening bulletin informed him that a large reward had been offered for the capture of one Gonzagi, and another for one Chrysoris, each suspected of the murder of Parolio.

From Hermilio, who was at home on parole, he soon learned such particulars as were known.

"In what way can I serve you, Hermilio?" said the Doctor.

"You spoke recently of Gonzagi; you said he was ill at the hospital."

"Yes, I remember telling you so. I saw him only this morning; he was better, he read of the death of Parolio, and seemed strangely moved—he could not possibly have killed him—he has been in the hospital for weeks and the attendants can give an account of every moment of his time."

"Then he confessed he knew Parolio?"

"Yes; he said they had been old friends. He fainted when he read of the assassination, and declared he must see the dead body. Gonzagi could not have committed the murder. I cannot, conscientiously, give up to justice one whom I believe to be innocent."

"No, no; and still you must see how I hoped it might have been Gonzagi. Chrysoris, in his right



mind, could not have done it, he had never spoken of such a person as Parolio, had never had dealings with such a one ; he had no motive for killing him. On the other hand, the letter, purporting to be from Gonzagi to Parolio, plainly indicates that there was enmity between them. And yet a horrible thought haunts me ! Why did chance thrust this Gonzagi upon us ? Would I had let Chrysoris die, for since that fatal day, there has been little else than tears and heartaches in my family."

"Hermilio, do not let suffering blind you to justice. I beg to share the responsibility of this mistake, yet I cannot bear it all since you commanded me to proceed with my experiment, even after I had warned you of possible consequences."

"I alone am to blame," said Hermilio. "Chrysoris was my dying brother, and now he is an outcast—a price set upon his head—and he may be a murderer. I have sent for you to care for my mother. Should she learn all, I fear it would kill her. She mourns, incessantly, the absence of my brother. Her mind has woven a thousand phantasies, and none may equal the reality. I may be called away, and I ask you, as my friend, to see her sometimes."

"Yes, Hermilio, I will do all you ask."



“Chrysoris”—continued Hermilio—“may be taken at any moment, and with my dull senses I see no way out of this.”

He spoke in the dry, quiet tone of a hopeless man. Emotion was dead. There remained an apathetic resignation to fate.

Dr. Baajo urged Hermilio to seek rest and sleep, and thus fortify himself for the coming day. He then, late as it was, turned his steps towards the hospital. He learned that Gonzagi had left in the afternoon, saying he would not return.

He again made inquiries as to whether Gonzagi, during his stay there, had ever gone out on business, or on other affairs. No—he had never, under any pretext whatever, quit the building for a single hour.

Still, the more the Doctor reflected, the more it looked as though Gonzagi might have committed the murder—but then, why had Chrysoris absented himself in this mysterious way? Perplexed, the Doctor sought his home and bed, to sleep—if sleep could be wooed.



## CHAPTER VIII

GONZAGI LEAVES THE HOSPITAL, AND WHILE MAKING  
A SPEECH OVER THE DEAD BODY OF PAROLIO  
IS ARRESTED FOR MURDER



IT was late in the afternoon. The full splendor of departing day illumined the place wherein reposed the body of Parolio. Throughout the last few hours hundreds had come to see it.

It is not often a person is found addressing the dulled ears of a corpse, yet here was one. He looked intently at the dark, finely-chiselled face which, in life, full of beauty and passion, had now something celestial in its expression of rapt repose.

A mocking voice was heard—"How is it Parolio, where is the sparkle of your eye, so quick to charm? Where the bending grace—the seductive smile? Where lies it all, now, Parolio? And your heart, good Parolio, is it in its wonted place—and is this all there is of you, my poor Parolio?"

And with that, Gonzagi turned to those nearest and in a changed and hissing tone, said—"A



blackest heart never beat ; I could tear him, where he lies ; I have been cheated of my revenge—I should have killed him.”

Thereupon, he became as one demented. He forgot he was in the midst of those who might consider cursing the dead a matter of questionable taste. He forgot that in the wide universe there was aught save himself alone, bowed under the weight of an irreparable wrong.

Brilliant as had been the search for the murderer of Parolio, no one had thought of looking for him in the presence of his victim. Yet it was there—the attention of the police having been called to his strange conduct—that Gonzagi was taken as a common brawler—and, a little later—being identified as the probable homicide—placed behind the bars of a prison cell.

The paroxysm of rage which had led to his exposure having subsided, he was amazed at the turn affairs had taken, but seemingly, did not particularly regret it. He had the superstitious notion, common to many, that his ideas of justice were God’s ideas, and that a momentary inconvenience could in no way interfere with the proper adjustment of things.

He rather rejoiced at having the opportunity of



telling how bitterly he hated Parolio—how he had pursued him for years—how he had escaped—how he had been defrauded of his natural right to take his life—and all the other tangled and incoherent emotions that wrung his heart. Therefore he went quietly, and seemed little concerned about the result. He had not speculated upon who the probable slayer might have been. It seemed so natural that others, like himself, should want to put an end to Parolio, that it had not dawned upon his mind that a crime had been committed or that anyone could be punished. Parolio so well merited the foulest treatment that from the height of his outraged feeling, Gonzagi had made a standard by which all men should see and judge him.

So soon as it was known that Gonzagi was under arrest Dr. Baajo sought him in his cell, and found him singularly composed and indifferent to his situation. "So, then, you assassinated Parolio?" said the Doctor.

"No."

"Everything leads to that conclusion."

"Nothing leads to it. You know Dr. Baajo I could not have done it."

"So it appeared to me at first. Had you perpetrated this deed you would have been fully prepared for the discovery of the body, which must have been



made sooner or later. You fainted when you read of it, neither would you have confessed—as you did to me—to an acquaintance with the man.”

“Unhappily for me,” said he, “another more fortunate has rid the world of its arch villain.”

“Gonzagi, if you speak like that you will—however innocent you may be—ruin your case.”

“Oh, I shall speak the truth, lies will never serve me if the truth cannot.”

“There is a middle course. You cannot make everybody see this as you see it.”

“Everyone in my place would have loathed Parolio as I did, and do. Men, women—all will understand that my natural feeling for Parolio was, and is, undying hate. I shall be acquitted, even though it is proved that I murdered him.”

“But when you spoke to me of Parolio you did not carry this tone of fierce detestation?”

“No—I wished to go away quietly, but now since things are as they are let events take their course—I have no fear.”

“You have then employed a lawyer?”

“Yes.”

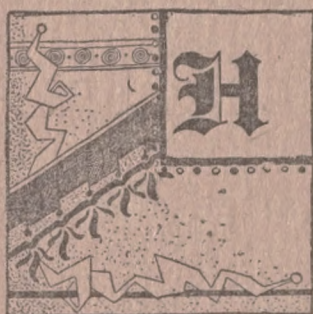
“And you have no uneasiness—no misgivings?”

“None whatever. To wait here till my case is called may weary my spirit, but patience is my strongest virtue.”



## CHAPTER IX

### HERMILIO AND THE DOCTOR SPECULATE UPON FUTURE PROBABILITIES



HERMILIO and Dr. Baajo sat through long evenings and talked on every phase of the still profoundly mysterious murder, but they reached no conclusion. The Doctor once tried to construct a theory of suicide. "It could have been"—he said—"Parolio's despair and remorse because of the grievous and irreparable wrong he had done an innocent girl—the perpetual fear—knowing that Gonzagi was eternally dogging his footsteps; these were enough to drive him to suicide."

"But the knife and the disappearance of Chrysoris," exclaimed Hermilio.

"Yes, there lies the difficulty. No, after all, it was not suicide."

So, night after night, they went all round, but never touched upon an absorbing idea which permanently dwelt with each.



At last Hermilio said, "Do you think Gonzagi murdered Parolio?"

"Yes, and no," replied the Doctor.

"Do you believe I did it?"

"No."

"And Chrysoris?"

"I am more guilty than he, poor fellow, and yet, he might have ——"

At this point, Hermilio bent his eyes full upon those of the Doctor. Subtle currents emanating from the minds of each met, and, interblending, their mutual thought became manifest, and they could now speak of what hitherto neither had dared.

"You, then, believe, Dr. Baajo, that such a thing could be?"

The Doctor replied by asking another question—  
"Why does a woman sometimes come to look like a man, think like him and act like him, after living with him as wife for years and bearing him many children?"

"I have never observed such a thing—will you explain?"

"It is that this man's blood through his offspring, mingling with the blood of the woman, carries with it his stronger thoughts, superstitions and religion



—and these write their impress—modifying even the physical conformation of the face.”

“A strange and startling idea”—said Hermilio—  
“then, with each child, the wife is nearer and nearer bound to her husband by the ties of consanguinity?”

“Yes.”

“And does the law take no note of this?”

“No—It is too stupid to know it, but I know it. For this reason the younger children in any large family are weak, diseased, and intellectually incapacitated to struggle with the troubles of life. Families should be limited by law to five children. Look at me—in mine I am the seventh in number. This is the first time, in many years, I have spoken of that family. So soon as I was able to think I ran away, and left my name behind me.”

The Doctor looked strangely agitated. The pupils of his eyes dilated, his breast swelled with painful emotion. He arose and while walking to and fro, continued speaking rapidly.

“This is a worse than heathen age—do you see this purple face? That tells the degree of civilization we have reached.”

Hermilio was alarmed. Although knowing the Doctor was called mad, this was the first glimpse at his demented side, but so many things had hap-



pened in the last few months, that nothing seemed improbable, nor did he assume the judgment to know sense from nonsense, so he said, soothingly,—

“Yes, all this may be true, but are not these speculations harmful to us—had we not better try to cope with realities, as seen by the many?”

“Perhaps so—go on then Hermilio”—said the Doctor, more quietly.

“We will, then, come back to Chrysoris. Let us suppose that he is eventually found, and it is proved that he did thrust the knife into Parolio’s heart; both judge and jury would laugh at our theory that though guilty, he is innocent.”

“Yes—but he may not be taken; even now, the search is almost abandoned. If the nerve and courage were given him to slay, might not have been added the cunning, to hide his tracks, beyond the possibility of discovery? You, Hermilio, are far more likely to be punished for the death of Parolio than anyone else.”

“If my supposition is correct, I alone am guilty and will submit to the lot apportioned me.”

“I am an accomplice,”—said the Doctor“—but no one will believe it. Look at this simple statement. You and I in saving one man have caused the death of another. What can be done with us—we can



never bring back the life taken, nor make the guilty innocent, nor ourselves as we once were. Can you see any design in this monstrous course of events? Have we sinned more than others? Are we more ignorant than others? I have in my days of intellectual vain-glory declared that all suffering follows ignorance—and does it not? For forty full years I have studied the blood—not only its palpable properties, but its odor, its temperature, its subtile essences and its strange persistency. The fact that it holds the potentiality for all good and all ill has, in special instances, kept me on the alert for years, only, at last to see it blossom in something unexpected, yet fore-ordained. I never loved a woman for the reason that when permitted to approach near enough, I fell to speculating upon her as a subject; I would watch the lambent flame expressed on cheek and brow as emotion stirred and warmed her blood. I would guess at, and try to classify her ancestors—whether, the fire of the air, entering through their lungs, had led them forth with sword in hand, to deeds of valor, in the open field, or whether, with passionless breath, in darkened chambers—sunk into worlds within themselves—they plucked pale flowers of abstraction, odorless but immortal.



I have said the blood is all; that it moves in a circle including all; that it creates thought, and by thought, is created. I fancied nothing had escaped me, when lo! on a certain day I took a man of whom I knew nothing, save that his blood looked strong and vital, and forgetting all those finer, more important qualifications, I pumped his deepest, darkest, secret into the veins of Chrysoris. This thoughtlessness is being punished as it deserves. Yes—ignorance is the source of all evil. In confessing our weaknesses, we fancy we are making propitiatory offerings to some power above, thereby securing forgiveness for past errors, and possibly for future indulgence. Vain hope! To see our mistakes, is not sufficient—to suffer the consequences of our sins is not sufficient for our safety. We must go back within, and by re-creating the energies of our minds, attune them to the harmonious note of the great Universal Whole. Then shall we know. Then shall we be free.

Arranging several details for the trial, which was now soon to take place, they separated for the night.

Some being gifted with an insight into the intricacies of the human mind might have named the moment when the real madness of the Doctor started to quicken in him, but with us it dates from the



time he commenced to reason on the probable course the law would take in respect to the Parolio tragedy. He began and ended always in the same place. His first thought was a bitter one against Gonzagi—Gonzagi was the initial step into darkness. Association of ideas led him to do injustice, but he quickly corrected himself. "Fate put him into the garden that, through him, my theory might be tested—he is not to blame"—he would whisper to himself. Having attained this position, taking all those concerned in the homicide, he would go over each word, each act, but never being able to come to an opinion he would return upon himself and begin again.

The days ran into weeks and still no word came from Chrysores. No clew had been neglected; every device of the detective system had been brought into play. In vain! He had vanished as a shadow, and left no trace. He was as a tale that is told, and the world had almost ceased to connect his name with the murder of Parolio. He came of a family whose members, heretofore, had lived and died honest people, and this, in a measure, protected his memory as well as furnished a pretext for permitting Hermilio to remain with Melegrippia. Together, they watched each night for the



return of Chrysoris, and when worn with fatigue, and finally retiring, they would place a lamp where its rays might meet and light his coming.

Each day Melegrappia became feebler. She was slowly dying of a broken heart. Chrysoris had been her idol, her pride, her companion during all her happy days. The hope of again seeing him ceased to exist, and her life was slipping away. Dr. Baajo's visits failed of any effect ; she had become as a little child, sweet and irritable by turns ; she accepted the care and caresses of Hermilio, but her heart was ever with her first-born. At times, she fell into states of wild frenzy, and clothing in words the weird fancies thickly crowding her brain, she would beg to be gone that she might wander the world over in search of her son.

After each of these attacks she grew visibly weaker, and before the beginning of the trial of Hermilio and Gonzagi, for the murder of Parolio, this sinless, loving woman died ; and gracious tears fell from the eyes of Hermilio, for he felt that death had come to his house as a blessing.



## CHAPTER X

### GONZAGI TRIED FOR THE MURDER OF PAROLIO AND ACQUITTED



GONZAGI'S sanguine views were not shared by his advocate, a man whose dull fancy never led him beyond the plain facts in sight. The point from which his judgments were made was pivotal, and around it circled a constellation of prejudices inherited from ancestors, who had walked in straight and narrow paths. Lack of imagination cut him off from all touch of sympathy with the feelings or actions of criminals. His mind, inflexible and limited in its notions of right and wrong,—his moral nature cramped, colorless and vapid, illy provided him with the qualities necessary for acquiring renown in the law, therefore, he had never risen to a place where he could command patronage. The needs of life compelled him to take whatever came his way, and that came generally from a class having little to pay for services rendered.

Knowing his attorney's weakness, Gonzagi's chief hope lay with himself.



The final day of his trial came. Through its more important, as well as petty, incidents and unforeseen annoyances, no one bore himself so well as Gonzagi. Under the examination by the opposing counsel, he held strictly to what he termed the truth.

"You then hated Parolio?"—queried the lawyer.

"Yes."

"You had laid your plans?"

"Yes."

"You knew where he lived?"

"Yes."

"You had watched his house?"

"Yes—I knew it well."

"Why did you not do the deed at once?"

"I had been in the city ten days only; there were other things to be done first."

"What things?"

"It was necessary that I should earn some money."

"Why?"

"That I might more quickly quit the country."

"You had even planned the manner of your escape?"

"Yes."

"And this letter, in my hand, did you write it?"



"Yes."

"Why?"

"That Parolio might be on his defense. Also, I wished him to know my vengeance was on his track, and that from one moment to another he was in danger, I wished him to taste death day by day, and hour by hour. I wished to make life an agony to him."

"Would you have stabbed him in the back?"

"No—we had decided the blow must be in the heart."

"We—who?"

"My mother and myself."

"Yet, you deny having killed Parolio."

"I did not kill him. You are aware from the testimony that I could not possibly have done so, since a man cannot be in two places at one time."

The story was all drawn from him. He avowed in plain terms that it had been his fixed determination to take the life of Parolio; that it was a solemn duty he owed his family; that the spirits of his ancestors cried to him from the past—pointing with unerring finger the way he was to take; he had listened for a restraining voice—he had listened in vain—and that one regret would overshadow his remaining days—the regret that he himself had not slain Parolio.



The testimony concluded. Gonzagi was asked if he had anything to say.

He arose. Memory with cruel rapidity swept him from the home of his youth to the present. Under the burden of emotion, he became transformed. His eyes gleamed as though following the dread march of events that had brought him from afar, even here, to the bar of justice. With an effort, he mastered the rising spectres of the past, and said quietly :

"I have but a word. A man does not parade his shame and sorrow to save his own life which, after all, is scarce worth living. I am not of your country, but feeling is common to the human race, and you will all understand me. I come of a people who love and honor their mothers and sisters. We make slaves of them ourselves, but we permit no man to do them wrong. This Parolio, whose dead body now corrupts the earth, came like an angel of light. There was enchantment in the very air he breathed. He lingered with us long, and when he went, my young sister, the beautiful child, whose presence was a prayer and benediction, drooped and died. I did not kill Parolio, but God knows I intended to do so. Is there one amongst you who would not feel as I have felt? If you are men, I can trust myself in



your hands. You will let me go, so soon as may be, that my mother may know the deed is done, and that I still live."

The note of repression in Gonzagi's voice while speaking, and his complete mastery of himself, forced the conclusion that underneath that cold exterior lay burning floods of hate, outraged feeling and despair. During all the trial, the passionless calm of his countenance remained unmoved, save when he spoke of his sister's death: then, stirred to his depths, pain for an instant showed its signal on lip and brow.

Gonzagi was acquitted. He walked forth free—blameless! He gave his hand in farewell to Dr. Baajo, who had been a valuable witness in his behalf and—without joy—without haste or surprise, he went away.



## CHAPTER XI

### HERMILIO TRIED AND CONVICTED



WITH Hermilio's fair name calumny had recently made free. It based its calculations and insinuations upon the well-known fact that a large family inheritance would become his on the death of Chrysoris, and also upon the fact that his character, generally, was open to criticism—since he not only tolerated, but liked people of doubtful respectability. Hostility against him attained such proportions that, finally, it was boldly declared that he, more easily than any other, could account for the strange disappearance of his brother, and the general opinion was that he should be compelled to solve the mystery. There remained to him, after the acquittal of Gonzagi, but a single friend.

Hermilio prepared for his trial mechanically. He secured for his defense a man whose broad nature included possibilities of all good, all evil. Through him the wrongs of the worthy were sure of redress,



and for the criminal he plead from a sympathetic standpoint with the criminal. He had rarely lost a case, yet he could inspire neither hope nor courage in the breast of Hermilio, nor persuade him to make a fair presentation of favorable points in the situation. The opposing counsel drew the following damaging testimony.

"Did you know Parolio?"

"No."

"Had you ever heard of him?"

"No."

"Did you ever see him before going to his room in company with the police?"

"Yes, once."

"Where?"

"In his room."

"What was he doing?"

"I thought him asleep, I was absorbed in my own affairs and was concerned, chiefly, about my brother."

"Oh! I see—where is your brother?"

"I don't know."

"Is he living or dead?"

"I don't know."

"You couldn't, then, be made to produce him?"

"No."



"Did he know Parolio?"

"I cannot say; he never spoke of him to me."

"Still he went to his house?"

"Yes, he entered the house where Parolio and others lived."

"His knife was found in Parolio's heart?"

"Yes."

"How came it there?"

"I do not know."

"You mounted the stairs in search of Chrysoris but found only Parolio asleep?"

"Yes."

"And your brother has never been seen or heard of since?"

"No."

"Your brother possessed a large fortune, did he not?"

"Yes."

"And you also?"

"No."

"You, then, in case of his death would fall heir to a major part of that fortune?"

"Yes."

Great drops of water fell from the brow of Hermilio as it slowly dawned upon him that, possibly,



he might be proven guilty, not only of Parolio's death but of his brother's also.

The prosecution went on with one question after another, till it seemed as though the law's inquisition must soon fail from exhaustion. The final argument, learned and raised into eloquence by the advocate's personal belief in the innocence of his client, was made. It was of no avail. The evidence, while not sufficient to convict Hermilio of the murder of Parolio, was amply so to prove him guilty of coveting his brother's fortune.

By what process of reasoning the jury arrived at the conclusion that Hermilio had slain Chrysores or why he should, on that account, be convicted of the murder of Parolio is not known, but such appeared to be the fact, and he was adjudged guilty.

It had been observed, since the acquittal of Gonzagi, that some singular illness had seized upon Dr. Baajo. He no longer attended to professional or other duties. Wherever he chanced to be, with unvarying step he constantly strode to and fro, and was heard to mutter frequently—"Oh, I must—I must."

He watched the trial of Hermilio closely. Every day found him listening attentively, and mumbling



to himself at intervals. When Hermilio gave answers, prejudicial to his case, the Doctor would clasp his head in his hands, as though seized by a deadly pain. When all was over and there arrived a moment when such a thing could be, Dr. Baajo—to the amazement of all—walked up to the Judge's stand.

“I am the murderer of Parolio.”

No word was spoken, no movement made. “Yes—I killed Parolio, and I wish to suffer the penalty for my deed. Set free this innocent man. Parade no more your want of insight into the realities of things. Do you wish to know how I accomplished it? Shall I explain? Very well—you shall hear, but you will never understand. You concede that by transmission, a later generation inherits the loves and hates, the affections and feuds of a former one. Note well what I say.”

Here the Doctor glanced proudly around upon his auditors—his tall form erect—the purple stain on his cheek accentuated by the pallor of his brow—his countenance aglow with emotion, he looked, indeed, what all now thought him.

“Officers of the law”—said the Judge sternly, “take charge of this insane man, and see that he is properly cared for.”



Hermilio, though having been sentenced, had not been removed, nor had restraining hands been yet laid upon Dr. Baajo. They turned towards each other, their silence being eloquent of reciprocal thought.

It has been suggested by the hopeful that at some future day soul may be able to communicate with soul by that, now imperfect, medium the human eye. Seeing these two, at this supreme moment of their lives, one might have said that that hour had already struck.

“Dr. Baajo, it was to be—let us submit to the inevitable, with dignity.”

“Hermilio, in a sphere where the semblance of things is mistaken for the real, there must ever exist recurring woe. Happiness,” said the doctor, lifting his hand and pointing upward, “lies beyond!”

They were then separated, and never, again, did fate accord them a meeting.



## CHAPTER XII

### DR. BAAJO GOES MAD AND COMMITS SUICIDE



R. BAAJO made no resistance, nor even spoke. Experience had shown him that to be sane one must keep within the lines drawn by the conservatism of society, and that to pass beyond a certain point therein was to invite the ill-will and the persecution of the multitude. However, it was not from fear of misinterpretation that he was silent—simply, he had nothing to say. His composure was considered a dangerous phase of the malady, and though walking under the escort of two guardians of the peace, the least perspicacious of observers would not have been surprised had ghastly deeds been done before he was safely housed and under lock and key. It had been predicted long since that, sooner or later, the tottering mind of Dr. Baajo must fall. He had despised mankind, thus showing the first unfailing symptom of insanity; he had set at defiance and laughed at the received



opinions of men in regard to religion, morals, and politics; he mocked the seemingly good and virtuous for their pretensions; the cold bare facts of every day life to him had peculiar meanings, and then he treated the poor free of charge; aberrations all, springing from a diseased mind, and, moreover, it was thought that while there were young men and women to be corrupted by new *isms*, Dr. Baajo, sane or insane, should not be permitted his liberty. Still, the customary forms must be observed. He could not, legitimately, be sent to an asylum, unless by virtue of the certified opinions of those pronounced by law to be qualified to tell the sane from the insane.

During the examination, believing the result inevitable, Dr. Baajo took the opportunity to prove himself unmistakably mad.

"My good fellow," began a wise expert, "what is the general state of your health?"

"Poor, very poor, indeed," said the doctor, demurely.

"What has occasioned it?"

"This social and religious atmosphere is too pure, too rare. My spiritual lungs bleed. I suffer greatly."

"How long have you been affected in this way?"

"Ever since I have been old enough to think."

"You are at war, then, with the existing state of things?"



"No."

"Then you approve?"

"No."

"We do not understand you."

"Probably not; but that is of no importance."

"Come, come, impertinence won't make things any easier for you; besides, you may not fare so badly as you fancy."

"Fare badly? Going to an insane asylum isn't the worst that could happen to a man; he might be compelled to live in this upright, law-sustaining community."

"You are not satisfied with the verdict in the late trial?"

"I have no complaint to make. The innocent man who is to suffer for my guilt has occasion to find fault, not I."

"True, true; but you see opinions differ, and—"

Here, the doctor, becoming impatient, interrupted his questioner.

"Do anything you like, take me where you will, chain me like a dog, but spare me your talk. Of all the sounds furnished by this good earth, to me the most hopelessly bad is a voice coming out of a human thing without soul, brain or blood, and I beg you to close your lips from this on."



Duty did not permit the man to follow this advice. He continued his questions, and the doctor's silence arguing an increased tendency towards lunacy, the necessary papers were drawn up in accordance with the showing.

Dr. Baajo's dementia, though supposed to be of a growing and dangerous kind, was recognized as being yet in its incipency. Therefore, when he asked the privilege of taking with him certain things needful for his personal convenience and comfort, it was granted him.

He was accompanied to his home by two officers of the law, who never for a moment left his side. On entering he went directly to a large safe or case, which stood at the end of his room, opposite the door, and took therefrom a small box and opened it with a key.

The men, feeling he was safe, seated themselves near the door, and were not observing him particularly, but rather the room itself, which was unique in its arrangements, combining beauty and ugliness.

The Doctor, turning to them, asked permission to write a short note before leaving. The request granted, he sat down near a large table, in the centre of the room, on which were the necessary materials for his purpose. Each moment the



expression of his eyes grew more vague as though approaching, in vision, the border line separating the seen from the unseen world. Then, as though just realizing the passing of time, he dashed off a few lines.

The pen had barely left his fingers, when, suddenly, he sprang to his full height, then fell, with a heavy thud, to the floor where, in agony, he rolled from side to side, spasms of pain tearing and convulsing his body. The white foam broke from his lips, but no groan escaped him. Nothing could be done. He was dead, even, before assistance could reach him. The unerring poison, kept as a sure transit from life's too bitter sorrows, had served him well.

These are the words penned in that brief moment :

"I now take myself off. I have had enough. Since my advent into the world, memory recalls no day free from humiliation or suffering; no day wherein man's merciless eye let pass unobserved my facial defect; no day wherein I found solution for the maddening questions propounded by the cruelty of my lot. My mother loved her handsome children; and I was a reproach to my father. I am the creature before whom every other, unashamed, has delighted to show the lowest side of his nature. In view of all this, no man can say I lacked courage, or that I refused to play the part assigned me. But now, I have done. For, by my wretched bungling with the laws of nature, I have broken hearts and covered them with the cold clay of earth. I have made outcasts of men, innocent and good. And I will no longer submit to the torture called life. Yet—alas! one regret—Hermilio, I loved—Hermilio, I shall see no more!"



## CHAPTER XIII

CHRYSORIS REACHES THE HOME OF GONZAGI AND PROCLAIMS HIMSELF THE MURDERER OF PAROLIO



BEFORE a lonely house in a distant land, Chrysis at last stayed his faltering steps. Emaciated, exhausted, and lacking the force to go farther, he fell upon the threshold, crying with his fainting voice—"Mother, I have killed him—I have killed him."

Forth, from an inner chamber, came a woman, living—yet, not as one alive. Her dark eyes shone with glittering light, and she trembled from head to foot. She had been beautiful, and was so still, but in another fashion.

"Arise, my son, and tell me, once again, that he is dead."

"Let me rest awhile—I am ill and weary of life"—he said.

The woman raised his head in her arms, and touched his brow with her lips. For three years



she had awaited his coming, and tears fell from her burning eyes.

“My son—you are not the same. I do not know you. Are hate and revenge thus potent to alter the lineaments of a human face. Do daily hardships, and nightly vigils in strange lands, thus, transform? Gonzagi, arise—that I may look upon you.”

Chrysis heard the name. O God! that name awoke an echo that resounded in the innermost chamber of his soul. His mind thrilled and kindled with the consciousness of returning memory. “Gonzagi!” Oh! at last—at last.

He lifted his eyes, and made an ineffectual effort to raise himself from where he had fallen. Suddenly, a gurgling sound was heard, and from his mouth poured a stream of blood. It came, with frantic joy, as though escaping an odious prison whose walls had been hateful to it. And, still, it flowed. Not after the manner of its kind but, seeming to possess instinct and intention, its dark stream ran like a living thing, and glistened before the eye as it sinuously stole to the floor, where it rested in a dark pool with shining surface. Around it—drawing away, as though to separate itself—was a paler fluid and above it, faint but far-reaching, arose an odor



subtle, penetrating, and touching to activity many things long dormant in the mind of Chrysis.

The distracted woman, in her sanest moments, had never contemplated the possible illness or death of her son. She staunched the current. She called him by all the endearing epithets which love lavishly employs. She drew him to her breast. She bade him live a while—if only to bless her.

“And this”—she muttered—“is God’s way! O! that I were God for a day—I would give in to the keeping of mothers, forever, their innocent daughters and their good sons”—and she wrung her hands and groaned aloud.

But Chrysis did not, then, die—he lived many days to the confusion and mental disquietude of the woman who thought herself his mother.

His long marches through untold perils of flood and field; his escapes from wild and savage beasts; his sufferings from hunger and thirst, had weakened his body, which, through all, had heretofore been upborne by superhuman strength, and when this rupture came to his relief, Chrysis felt passing from him a demon of darkness and destruction, before whom he had been driven, powerless. Mutinous blood had peopled his brain with dread fancies, and terrible resolves.



Through him had pulsed streams of living fire, carrying him whither they would. And now! oh, now, he was at his journey's end, himself once more, and with a murdered man forever on his conscience.

He closed his weary eyes, and felt that never again could be untangled the web into which, by strange fatality, he had become immeshed.

As yet he knew not why he had slain a man. Alien blood had brought no memory with it. He had been impelled to his rash act by the blind force of a stern resolve, which, without a seeming motive, had sprung into active being within him.

At length sleep stole upon him, and, as he felt himself passing into the shadowy world of dreams, he prayed that he might never wake again. He longed for annihilation. The thought of utter extinction was pleasant to him. To let the burden of his woes slip gently away and no more be called upon to take it up—never more be awakened to the aching memory of what had been—this, this, he hoped.

He slept many hours, and when he awoke the returning past came to him softly as light. His mind was feeble, and he lay a long time without thinking. His broken will could no longer concentrate for action, but inclined him to drift with the tide of events.



No sooner were his veins empty of what could never rightly there affiliate than he began to mend in soul and body. While he lay there all his absented faculties came back to him, and he clearly comprehended what had taken place. Gonzagi, the man whom, above all others, he remembered; Gonzagi, dark and frowning, as he peered into the dying eyes of Chrysoris; yes, Gonzagi, was the son of the house where now he lay ill, distressed, and in a false position.

He looked forth into the bleak desert, whence he had so lately come, not knowing or caring what turn life was to take.

From day to day he deferred any explanation. The poor woman never ceased wondering at the marked changes she noted in his appearance. Often he detected in her grave eyes expressions of doubt which never came to her lips.

From the window of his room he saw in the garden a grave, whereon green and beautiful plants grew, wonderfully fair and fragrant. There, with clasped hands, the mother each evening prayed.

“O God, in heaven, save my beautiful child. O devil, in hell, hold *him* forever.”

Chrysoris had so often heard this prayer that he understood, without explanation, the tragedy that



had passed. By seeming to know he had learned all, and he felt less culpable when he found he had been the unconscious instrument of vengeance in the hands of fate.

In a few weeks he was well. Yet he lingered; he had become a part of the history of this family, and interwoven with much in it that was mysterious and painful. The young girl, forced to an untimely grave, imbued him with a sad interest. He had avenged her; and when he sat by her grave, as he often did, guilt fell from him, and he felt her serene eyes looking into his soul with pity and sorrow.

And then, in the twilight hours, again and again, to the wondering ears of the sad mother, who never wearied of listening, he recounted incidents of the fearful voyage he had made.

Never having left her native home, these words of mountain streams and desert wastes were to her as tales of enchantment. Sometimes, seeing Chrysores hesitate, she would say, "Go on, my son. I see all you have seen. I feel and hear all you have felt and heard. Tell it over again."

"Once, on the banks of a river, whose tortuous course crawled like a huge serpent across the land to the sea, as I stood gazing far at the gloomy mountain peaks, raised to soft and mystic heights, a sharp



cry of despair rang out and shook my very soul. Down the placid stream floated a man on a raft; his eyes fixed in terror on a bubble, which, from the depths below, had risen, fatal precursor of the *swirl* that awaited him. The frail bark, drifting within the enlarging circle, spun round with dizzy and ever increasing speed, and, with each revolution it neared the centre, which was hollowed like a cone. A moment more, one end of the raft stood straight in the air; the other was sucked into the opening, now grown deep and wide, and with its human freight it passed from sight, engulfed by the demon that raged below."

Repeating this, again and again, his mind became strangely fascinated, and his memory was loathe to quit the spot where, silently sweeping to its close, this tragedy had symbolized his own fate. *He* was that man, gliding peacefully down the stream of time, when, without a moment's warning, he was caught from his place and tossed mercilessly into the *swirl* of misfortune. Each turn but carried him nearer the narrow vortex; and, in this haunting vision, his distended eyes ever beheld the dread abyss awaiting him.

In order to draw him from the contemplation of his despair, the woman would urge him to recount still another story.



“At some distance from the river a heavy cloud, resting upon a mountain peak, absorbed my attention. Soon was heard a mighty rush! Down the incline came a moving wall of water, many feet high, the base toying with the thirsty sands and the brow toppling over. The earth trembled as the forefront of the torrent rushed past. The frightened waters of the river were rent in twain by its surge. The *cloud-burst* snatched me in its fury and swept me for miles, beating and bruising me with its angry torrent, which bore in its embrace huge rocks, uprooted trees, and all the things it had dislodged in its impetuous course.

“I came back to life under the caressing touch of my faithful dog, who, for the first time, had been separated from me. He, also, had been taken by the swift current, and borne I know not where; but, whatever the mysterious bond between us, it enabled him to find me.”

After a recital of these tales of suffering and anguish, there lingered with Chrysoris an influence, penetrating and sombre, of the other man, whose instrument he had been. There was something weird and unholy in his position. He longed to quit the place. He was not ungrateful for the care and affection lavished upon him, but his conscience



told him he had duties to perform elsewhere. His fancy often shadowed forth the possible consequences of his crime.

Who, then, had been punished in his stead? And Melegrappia and Pamphilia, how fared life with them? And how was it with Hermilio, the brother, dearer than all? These questions could not be silenced, and, finally, he elected to steal away as mysteriously as he had come.

This green bower of repose, where he had found life, and had been restored and fortified, could no longer detain him.

One night, as he saw the woman kneel upon the blossoming grave, and lift her thin hands in invocation, "God in heaven, bless my innocent child," he closed his ears that no word more should reach him, and so strode forth to his doom.



## CHAPTER XIV

### CHRYSORIS AND GONZAGI MEET IN THE DESERT



T WAS near a well in a great desert whose vast expanse stretched away towards infinity. The hour was noon, and the sun shone, overhead, in dazzling splendor, the white sands gleaming in the rays like snow-fields in winter. The far-off mountains quivered on the sight; the whole landscape, flooded in glory from the midday heat, shook with tremulous motion.

Two men approached from opposite directions. Each dragged his weary steps; each was frenzied with hunger and thirst; but, even thus, they stepped back appalled.

“Chryсорis?”

“Gonzagi?”

“Chryсорis, why are you here?”

“Gonzagi, I killed Parolio.”

“You?” demanded Gonzagi.

“Yes, and I have told her he is dead.”

“And she lives, Chryсорis?”

“Yes, she still prays upon your sister’s grave.”



“And how did you do all this?”

“I know not—only that after your blood was in my veins I became another man. I was filled with feelings of hate and murder. I even saw this Parolio—his image had become a part of me; I was with Hermilio; looking down a small street, I saw a house; I seemed to know it well; I was led, as by a living hand, to the spot; I opened a door, and there, behind a table, sat Parolio—his face towards me—and, before he could speak, or rise, or scarcely move, I plunged my knife into his heart. I was glad. The sound of the gushing blood was music to my ears. I was in an ecstasy of happiness, when, suddenly, a voice, faint and far, yet deep within my soul, thrilled my senses—calling “My son, my son!” I stepped out of the window, on a low roof, from thence to the ground, all the while rejoicing that I had killed him.”

“It must have been, at that moment, that something heavy lifted from my spirit,” said Gonzagi. “Go on—I wish to hear all.”

“I, then, quit the scene. Before I had gone far, a gaunt and hungry dog scented me; he licked my hand, and followed me, and we left the city. I looked neither to the right nor left; nor planned, nor took thought for the morrow. I was pushed on



as by necessity, and always into secret and untravelled ways. For weeks—and months perchance—I sought the mystic voice that ever called. At last I found it, and died upon the threshold, or rather you, in that supreme, rapturous moment burst from my lips and left me, once again, myself. O! that such a fearful thing should be—and that I forever more must bear its haunting memory,” said Chrysoris.

“It is strange how all this could have happened. Would I had killed the villain Parolio. He was mine to slay. From place to place I had hunted him. At last he seemed under my hand. You have snatched the only joy earth could have given me. O! cursed fate that brought me to you.”

“You forget that you really murdered Parolio, that whatever he may have deserved from you—from me he merited not death.”

“Yes—but you have that, that I covet—a memory of the man’s final agonies—the music of the knife tearing through bone, muscle, and flesh—the last look of the eyes, entreating for mercy—these, these you have—I, alas, only a remembrance of the pale form of my sister who, from untold shame, hid her face in the grave. Stand on your metal, man, for as these memories sweep over me I feel myself going mad.”



“Strike—life holds no joy for me. But no, unhappy Gonzagi, yonder lies your work. Go and cherish the lonely woman who calls you son, tell her that though your hand is innocent of murder—you have killed your victim a thousand times, and that your sister is doubly avenged. Let peace come to your house, and when, in time, your daughters turn their innocent faces to the world, tell them to flee from the monster, man—that the prayers and curses of broken hearted women may cease to vex the air.”

“First, tell me how he died; picture it to me in living colors, that on summer evenings I may beguile my mother’s sad thoughts from the spot where they forever dwell. Yes, paint the scene, that I may feel it, or I must take your life for his, that I may know by substitution the raptures that revenge can give. Away, palefaced son of a craven race, that buys blood for gold. Away, lest I put my hand to your throat, for I feel advancing upon me that unquenchable thirst for taking human life, which has been growing—growing these many months—aye, since the time I placed the mould above my sister’s broken heart.”

“Gonzagi, lay not hand on me. I, also, am a desperate man. You forget I have wrongs greater than yours; that yours have been adjusted; that mine can



never be; and, of all men on earth, you shall no more insult me."

They sprang as though about to close in a fierce embrace. Gonzagi's poignard, as he snatched it from his belt, flashed in the sun; but, ere it fell, Chrysoris sank slowly to the earth, his weary limbs crumbling beneath him. He essayed to rise, but his body—the worn and shattered instrument of his soul—no longer responded to the will; he struggled and would have spoken; but—it was not to be. Pressing his face to the hot bosom of the desert with a long, deep sigh, he yielded up his life.

Gonzagi, startled from his frenzy by the tragedy enacting beneath his eyes, bent in pity above the fallen man. He found the vital spark extinct forever; he stretched the passive form on the warm sands; composed the limbs, and covered the face; then the fever of his passion being spent, he sat down to meditate on all that had been—on all that was.

Long he sat and thought. Finally, the shadows of evening fell. With his hands he scooped a shallow grave in the desert sand, and, as he lifted the cloth to gaze once again upon Chrysoris, the moon looked full down through a rifted cloud, and he saw him as one beatified. The earthly form, free from



the groping spirit's tyrannous grasp, resumed again its beauteous shape. No lines marred the brow's smooth surface ; no trace of the soul's turmoil was there recorded ; naught, save a pathetic repose, which, in the pale splendor of the moon, gave the face a seeming halo of glory.

"And is it thus nature fulfills her ends?" questioned Gonzagi, who still lingered.

He placed the body in the grave, and, when all was done, he covered it with stones, as a protection against the hunger of wild beasts.

"I will return," he thought.

Then, slowly, he trailed his course towards his home.



## CHAPTER XV

### HERMILIO AND GONZAGI OVER THE GRAVES OF THEIR DEAD



ERMILIO, the last of his race, convicted of the murder of Parolio, was banished forever from his native land.

He was not reluctant to go. He had long ceased to take a personal interest in existence. Hope and desire of life being dead in him, the inexorable forced his spirit to the contemplation of those questions old, old as the sun, yet all unanswered still.

Before quitting his country he visited the last resting place of Melegrappia.

“Poor little mother! Happily you are at rest,” he said, as his eyes fell upon the small grave. And, as he stooped to pluck a flower, hot tears fell from his parched eyes. “Sleep well, sweet mother. And now—farewell.”

He turned away, and was soon lost to sight.



Many years after—a lonely wanderer still—Hermilio came to a cool and fragrant spot, which, after the long stretches of the desert, seemed an earthly paradise. At a little distance, an aged woman, with stately, pious steps, walked to and fro. She stopped before two mounds, beautiful as only loved graves can be. She lifted her hands to heaven in prayer, “O God, in heaven, save my beautiful child.”

Hermilio gave his name, and begged an hour’s repose beneath the shade. He was led from the spot by a dark-browed man, who, more mournful than any living thing Hermilio had ever seen, pointed to a name on a stone above a grave, “Chrysoris.”

Hermilio had many years mourned his brother, as lost to him forever. Many years he had walked alone, without friend or foe, and now, seeing that loved name, he turned away overcome with conflicting emotions, and tears welling from their frozen source, moistened the green sod above the grave. He asked no questions, but listened, as one in a dream, to the voice of Gonzagi, as, in simple words, he told of Chrysoris—of all he had done, and felt, and suffered; of how—at last—he had perished on the burning desert, from exhaustion and despair—he told of his own contrition and repentance.



No thoughts of vengeance visited the heart of Hermilio. Long since, he had ceased to praise or blame. He no more said—"this is good," or "this is bad." He felt such discrimination made by the finite mind, to be impertinent and of no avail.

He and Gonzagi became old and withered men together. They would speculate upon the planetary worlds, and their objects of travel through space; they studied inanimate nature—"but behold"—they said—"thought is powerless before the mighty mystery, that guides a human soul, through its course on earth."

Daily, they visited the graves of their dead. As year succeeded year, these, nearly passionless beings, laid off one by one, their remaining prejudices and quietly loosening their hold upon materiality, the spiritual, to them, became manifest. And when their last hour struck—without pain, or conscious break of continuity, they passed to other forms of life.



























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